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Redevelopment Board Minutes 03/17/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board
 Minutes of March 17, 2008

Members Present: Christopher Loreti
 Andrew West
 Edward Tsoi
 Roland Chaput
 Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
 Joey Glushko
 Laura Wiener

Andrew West called the meeting to order at 7:04 and declared open the public hearing on Town Meeting warrant articles that proposed to amend the Zoning Bylaw. Andrew West explained that the articles proposed by the Redevelopment Board were in furtherance of the Board's efforts to revitalize Arlington's commercial sector.

Andrew West asked for comment on Warrant Article 12 concerning sustainable building techniques. Bill Reed suggested that there be some incentive to make applicants comply, and suggested that building designers can self certify their compliance. John Worden suggested that the impacts of demolition should also be included.

Andrew West asked for comment on Article 5 regarding Planning Department approval of all sign applications. Planning Director, Kevin O'Brien pointed out that this was a new layer of approval that is being proposed. Lew Cutler observed that it was no different than now exists. Michelle Meagher wished there were more input from the business people before changing the process. She also said that the Town needed a new application form for sign permits. John Worden observed that Town Meeting will want to know what criteria will be used by the Planning Director to approve permits. He suggested that the Board also look at the section in the Town Bylaws concerning signs. He also reminded the Board that within historic districts, signs needed the approval of the appropriate historic district commission.

Article 6 regarding signs utilizing neon light – John Worden asked if it would allow moving neon light and it was pointed out that such moving signs were prohibited by another part of the bylaw.

Article 7 regarding bracket signs – There was no comment except that it was asked if a bracket sign could be a lighted box style. It was answered in the affirmative.

Article 13 regarding sandwich board signs – Michelle Meagher indicated that businesses needed a way to advertise, to create visual interest, and the Town should meet businesses halfway so as to allow this. Chris Loretto pointed out that the warrant article specifies that such signs would be allowed by special permit which has a \$400 fee. Michelle Meagher indicated that it had not been her understanding and that such a fee would not help businesses but hurt them. After discussion and learning that the special permit requirement could not be removed from the warrant article without exceeding the scope of the article, it was determined to vote no action on the article and bring a revised version back again next year.

Article 8 regarding temporary signs in windows – John Worden observed that there seemed to be a proliferation of cloth temporary signs recently and that they were displayed for too long a period of time.

Article 9 is a housekeeping article to make two corrections in the bylaw. No comment was made on the article.

Article 10 regarding seasonal seating. Michelle Meagher observed that it was a good idea.

Article 11 regarding the use of privately owned off-site parking spaces to meet parking requirements. Michelle Meagher asked about who is liable when off-site parking is used. It was pointed out that there would have to be a contractual relationship between the property owners and the contract would have to cover liability. The bylaw amendment simply allowed such spaces to be used to meet the bylaw requirement.

Article 14 regarding signs mounted on a truck or trailer. Kevin O'Brien asked the proponent why he didn't think such signs were already prohibited by section 7.04 e which prohibits portable signs? Greg Flaherty responded that the definition of a portable sign excluded signs painted on a vehicle and Article 14 would clear up any confusion about such signs.

Andrew West asked if there were any other comment to be made. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 8:20.

The Board then spoke with Michelle Meagher about the ARB sponsoring a workshop to investigate the formation of a Business Improvement District. The workshop is scheduled for April 3 and the Board indicated it would be a sponsor of the event.

Andrew West then introduced Christine Scypinski of Waterfield Design to present more information about the style of mall lights to be installed in the center. The Board also recognized JoAnn Robinson, co-chair of the Historical Commission to participate in the discussion. JoAnn Robinson showed the Board historical photos of Arlington street lights and indicated that it did not seem proper to mimic a colonial look, but rather to choose a style that has historically been used in Arlington Center. Christine Scypinski showed the Board two light styles which she thought met the Board's preferences as expressed at its February 25 meeting. She also discussed the style of the pole, the amount of cut-off in the light fixture, and the possibility of using aluminum rather than cast iron poles.

Of the two designs the Board leaned toward the one called Ancestral, but preferred a light with more glass area. The discussion finally narrowed down the style choices to Lumec Serenade and Contemporary. Christine Scypinski will do more research on the two to see that they meet the Town's needs. The Board also narrowed the selection of trash containers and asked staff to check with DPW about its preferences in terms of size, and about the need for recycling containers at Broadway Plaza.

Kevin O'Brien indicated that there may be more money available for replacement lights after July 1st. The Board thought it was

desirable to replace as many lights as possible and instructed staff to survey the number of lights and determine how many could be purchased.

Andrew West then moved on to the subject of changes to the leased space in the Gibbs School building proposed by the Schools for Children. Kevin O'Brien showed the Board plans to divide part of the space in "the wing", formerly the media center of the school. The Board generally favored approval but wanted assurance that the mechanical systems would be adequate and advised that Schools for Children provide stamped architectural drawings which the board would review. The Board then had a short discussion with Suzanne Robinson of the Green Roundtable and Sustainable Arlington who had advised the Board on the wording of Warrant Article 12 concerning sustainable building techniques.

The Board then reviewed minutes of meetings. Roland Chaput moved that the Board approve the minutes of February 25, 2008 with minor amendments. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve. Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that the Board approve the minutes of March 3, 2008 with minor amendments. Chris Loretto seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve. Roland Chaput moved that the Board approve the minutes of March 10, 2008 with minor amendments. Chris Loretto seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien